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5p

libertarian struggle



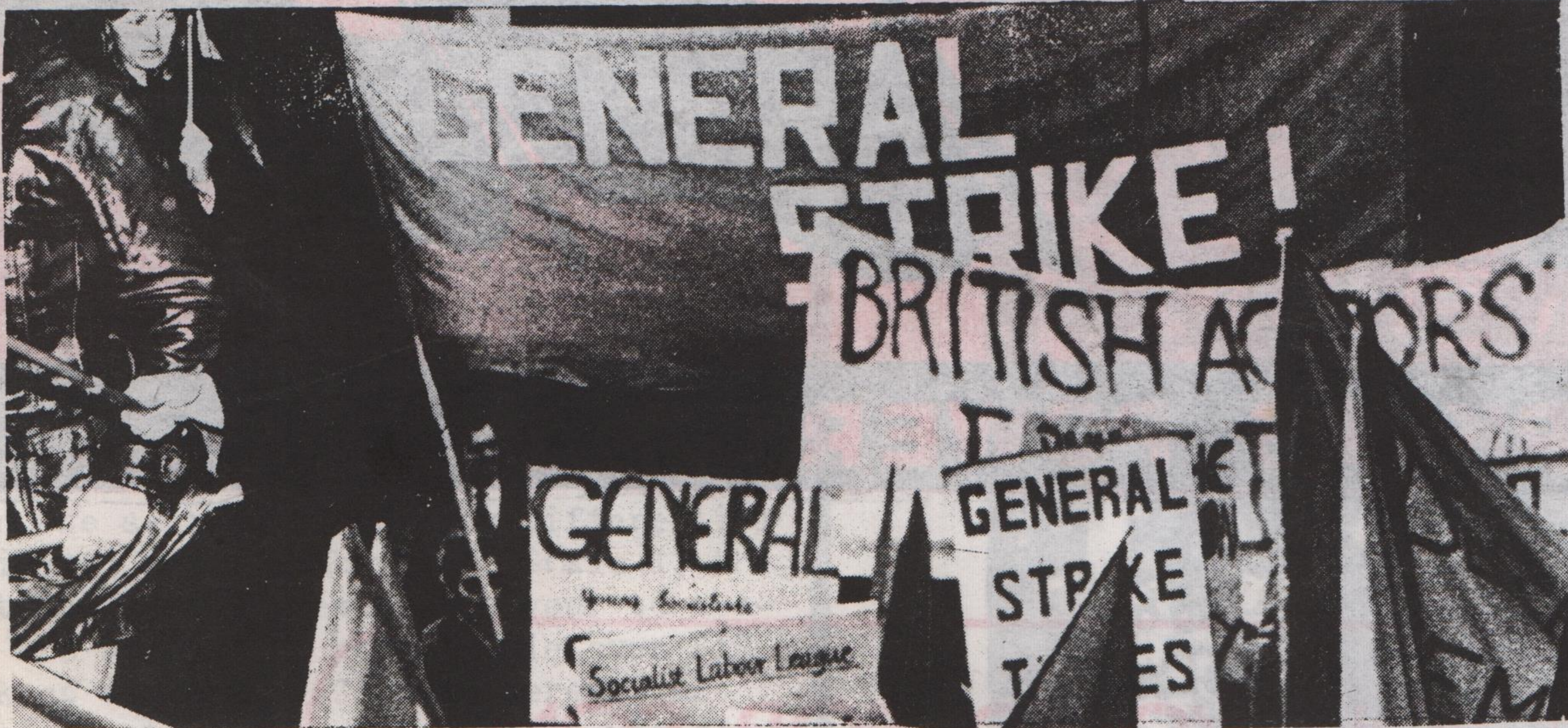
FOR WORKERS POWER

WHOEVER YOU VOTED FOR, SON,
THE GOVERNMENT GOT IN AGAIN



paper of the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists

STRIKE?



TROTSKYISTS CALL FOR GENERAL STRIKE - LED BY T.U.C.?

The miners' fight with the government has once again, as at the time of the Pentonville Five and last May, raised the question of the General Strike.

This brings up two questions. One is the reason Left groups put forward for having one; more important are the illusions about what a general strike really is.

At the beginning of the century, the 'myth of the general strike' was quite popular. In 1904-5 Russia was hit by a wave of strikes sweeping across vast areas of the country. Starting with individual wage claims, conflicts spread across industries and whole regions. They brought Russia to the edge of revolution.

In Britain, by contrast, the carefully constructed Triple Alliance of miners, railwaymen and transport workers, sold out on the miners. The T.U.C. general strike in 1926 lasted nine days and was called off precisely when the rank and file got control of it. It was supposed to help the miners; in fact it ensured their defeat after months of struggle - forced back to work by literal starvation.

The strike waves of 1915-20 never became a revolution, but again and again they brought British capitalism to the brink. They started in specific industries shipbuilding and engineering - but failed to spread, except to the miners. It is however exactly the Triple Alliance and a T.U.C. called general strike that the Workers Revolutionary Party wish to inflict on us now. Maybe that's the only way they can be the leaders.

What demands?

What of the demands of these latter day Syndicalists and Revolutionary Party idealists attach to the general strike? Nothing as drastic as workers power. The Communist Party wants a Labour government pledged to socialist policies. The Communists' call can only make sense in an international context. Brezhnev and the Russian bosses are as scared of a revolution as Ted Heath and the British bosses. The European conference of Communists came to the conclusion that the 'crisis' had been exaggerated, and that the ruling class really can give the workers more in the West. The Tories

know very well what they're doing. Squeezing the funds for economic growth out of our wage packets; goading militants to scare us all into subservience. After the last Labour government, how many people still think that Labour can produce socialism? Nationalisation has nothing to do with socialism for a start; miners and railwaymen made redundant, underpaid and the rest, amply demonstrate that. Even the 'famous' 25 nationalisations were rejected at the last Labour conference. In 1929 the Labour government came to power on a platform of radical nationalisation: it ended when even Labour M.P.s couldn't accept cuts in unemployment benefits, and a coalition government followed. Already some Labour M.P.s are talking of such a solution to the bosses crisis. They aren't even going to start with a programme of nationalisation.

The battles of 1971 - the occupation at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, Plessey, Fisher Bendix, Briant Colour; strikes in early '72 by miners and hospital workers; the Manchester engineering sit-ins were in fact fragmented and defencist. It was consciously a fight for wage claims in defence of jobs and the rest: the battles of that period ended in a series of defeats.

Because of the State's drastic interference in wage bargaining workers have been forced clearly to choose between giving up or confronting the whole State. Large sections of workers have, for the time being, given up. Each time a section of workers comes into struggle, this despair is challenged. Fights against closure by occupations; against part-time working, by striking for full pay. At a time when the Government makes every struggle a struggle against the State, these fragmented struggles tend to come together. We must fight, all the time, to make this 'tendency' a fact. This kind of escalating mass strike, throwing up shopfloor co-ordination forms the actual way the working class does move to confronting the power of the bosses. It's the job of revolutionaries to make it conscious and push it forward.

Only a solution managed by the working class is going to offer anything; which goes back to building for a mass confrontation with the bosses - and not calling for a general strike, for this or that demand.

T. (N.U.P.E.)

the sham of parliament

A voter of average life expectancy will vote ten times in a General Election. Ten minutes out of 70 years spent marking a little 'X' is our democratic right. The whole performance is phoney, which is why so much effort goes into convincing us that it is worthwhile. Ten minutes of democracy does not make up for 70 years of being pushed around by companies like Chrysler or Fords who are responsible to NO government.

Ten minutes of democracy does not help us when our factory is being closed down or our wages frozen.

Not only does voting affect a tiny proportion of our lives, there is usually no real choice anyway. If you were against the Common Market at the 1970 General Election for example, you would find that both parties were in favour of entry and we were going to enter anyway.

Voting gives us no control over the MPs or their golden pledges. Who voted for Labour in 1964 for more unemployment, a wage freeze, higher prescription charges and attacks on Trade Unions? Once elected we can do nothing to make sure they carry out their pledges until five years later when there will be a further choice between Tweedledee and Tweedledum.

Once elected Labour MPs disappear into the world of cocktail parties. They become politically corrupt. Unless we can threaten to recall them and insist they keep the lifestyles of their electors, they are bound to sell out.

Above all else, we may be equal at the ballot box but we are not equal in society. The president of Chrysler doesn't even vote because he is American. But he has more power than the combined votes of the 28,000 workers he employs there. If the 7% who own 84% of the wealth of the country are outvoted, they simply hire the newspapers, get pickets prosecuted, insist that anti-union laws and a wage freeze are introduced, and if all that fails threaten to pull out of the country. And they still have the real might of the State, the troops, to use.

Voting cannot represent the real strength of the workers because it is based on geographical constituency whereas the real power lies in industry. An MP who 'represents' the labourers and landlords of Coventry ends up representing no-one but himself. The right to vote was won after long struggles. How far parliament has declined in importance is shown by the growing disinterest in it. In 1951 some 20% of the population thought it mattered little or not at all which government was elected. By 1959 this had increased to 38%, to 49% in 1964 and to 51% in 1966. In the twelve years to 1966, the sales of Hansard, the minutes of what is said in parliament, dropped by three-quarters.

Because elections take place every five years, because we vote as individuals in the isolation of the ballot booth, because the choice is phoney and virtually irrelevant, the way we vote is not necessarily a guide to how we feel. Had there been a General Election in France in April 1968, there would have been few signs of the massive upheaval about to take place. For in May, without any warning, the largest General Strike in history broke out spreading even to footballers, can-can dancers and television.

R.K.

THE BRITISH LEFT

The parties and groups at present working on the left of the British political system, cannot create the conditions for the working class to take power and keep control over their own lives.

The Labour and Communist Parties work to change the present system through Parliament - an institution of power set up by the ruling class to check and weaken the class struggle.

The Labour Party works for a majority of its members in Parliament, then uses its powers as a government to intervene in the laissez-faire system to 'iron out' the contradictions in the capitalist system. The Labour Party has never been a working class party - the founders of the Labour Representation Committee of 1900 were not revolutionaries but liberal trade unionists who saw a need for a voice in Parliament to defend their hard won trade union rights which were being threatened.

It was in 1918 that the constitution of the Labour Party was drawn up, with the famous clause 4, pledging socialism as its goal, but the constitution was adopted at a time of massive industrial unrest following the Russian Revolution and anything less formal than a commitment to socialism would have endangered the future of the party.

Since the first labour government of 1923 the party has inevitably been forced to pass anti-working class legislation by the demands of the capitalist economy, the basis of which it does not attempt to change. It was a Labour government that tried to introduce anti-Trade union legislation: 'In Place of Strife'; reintroduced prescription charges; stopped school milk for the over-11's and tightened immigration controls. The Tory Party claim, with some justification, that they are only continuing what Labour started.

The Communist Party was founded as a revolutionary organisation, but is now committed to parliamentary means of change with the adoption of "The British Road to Socialism". It differs from the Labour Party in that it believes that parliament can be used to bring about a revolutionary change of



Vanessa Redgrave learning the party line

leadership and economic system. Once the party has a majority in parliament, it believes, the State machinery - the Army, Police and Civil Service - will obey the laws parliament passes. The C.P. attached great importance for this country in the election of Salvador Allende as the President of Chile in 1970 and his efforts to introduce socialism through the Army. With its emphasis on parliament as the centre of political power, the C.P. will inevitably hold back any revolutionary movement for the sake of winning elections.

The Trotskyist groups - International Socialists, International Marxist Group, and the Workers Revolutionary Party until this general election scorned parliamentary means to socialist revolution. At this general election, the WRP put up nine candidates and the IMG three as 'scapbox' candidates to tell the workers how bad the Tories are. But all these groups are led by their political analysis and theory to take the initiative for the revolution away from the proletariat and take on positions of power and leadership over the class. They believe that the working class can only achieve limited successes in changing its condition and developing its political consciousness. They say that a vanguard of politically-conscious leaders is necessary to achieve

revolution. Instead of raising political consciousness in all working people these groups work to achieve and keep power and influence in their trade unions and workplaces and use these powers "for the good of the class". The only way the working class can achieve and keep power is by raising the political consciousness of all the working class and ensure that power is maintained at shop-floor level.

The O.R.A. are opposed to any action or organisation which takes the initiative and control from ordinary working people and gives it to permanent officials, parliamentary 'representatives', or revolutionary 'leaderships'.

The O.R.A. works to raise the revolutionary consciousness of the working class, by raising questions of power and democracy and working towards the self activity of the class, organising and controlling their own lives by mandating any representatives and delegates and making them subject to instant recall. This is reflected in the form the organisation takes, which is a realisation of libertarian perspectives in the current situation.

M.P.

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ORA

groups & contact addresses

If you think that the direct control by working people over all aspects of their lives is worth fighting for..

If you think that what's needed now is independent rank and file organisation linking all aspects of working class struggle - in housing, schools, women's rights, in work, and all others.

If you think that the independence of these organisations must be defended from takeover by the Labour traitors, union bureaucracies, and the 'NEW leaderships'

If you think that an organisation is needed which fights for revolutionary politics in everyday struggles but has no intention of seizing power for itself.

THEN, JOIN THE ORA!

LOCAL GROUPS.

Glasgow: Gordon Sykes, 32 Queen Elizabeth Square, Glasgow C3.

Hull: Marion McCartney, 13 Colman Street, Hull.

Lancaster: Joe Thornberry, 56 Norfolk Street, Lancaster.

Leeds: Rodger Walker, 98, Shakespeare Court, Leeds 9

Manchester: Alan Hughes, c/o 100 Oxford Road, Manchester

North London:

York: Neil Hunt, 24 Moss Street, York.

There are also contacts in: Andover, Birmingham, Colchester, Dundee, Edinburgh, Harlech, Liverpool, West, East and South London, Newcastle, Norwich, Oxford, Poole, Reading and Swansea. If you want to be put in touch, write to Terry Green, at the York Group address.

THE ASLEF

For a number of years there has been mounting unrest among foot-plate staff (drivers and secondmen) of British Rail, brought about by their sense of injustice over the rate of pay for the job; and this has shown itself by outbreaks of industrial action- official and unofficial.

The present dispute can be traced back to the settlement of the last Rail dispute in June 1972. The settlement at the end of the dispute was a compromise- the amount accepted fell a long way short of what was considered by the drivers to be a realistic wage. The A.S.L.E.&F. Executive signed the agreement on the condition of a working party being set up to examine the wage structure. Ray Buckton, General Secretary of the footplatemen's union says of the following months:

"There have been constant calls for industrial action from all sections of my society because the membership did not consider that the necessary urgency was

being given to the negotiations. The early months of 1973 brought with them further industrial action, but I wish to state that it was only the firmness of my Executive committee that prevented many local groups of staff from taking matters into their own hands."

The working party consisted of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, who represent 96% of foot plate men, the National Union of Railwaymen and Management, and their job was to 'review the wages structure for footplate grades, including mileage and bonus payments...' By November 23rd 1972 it had only met once and so the A.S.L.E.&F., impatient at the delay, called a one day strike on that date. (The first official strike on a week day since 1955). Eventually Management put forward their proposals, which the A.S.L.E.&F. rejected and the present industrial action began on December 12th 1973.

The Dispute

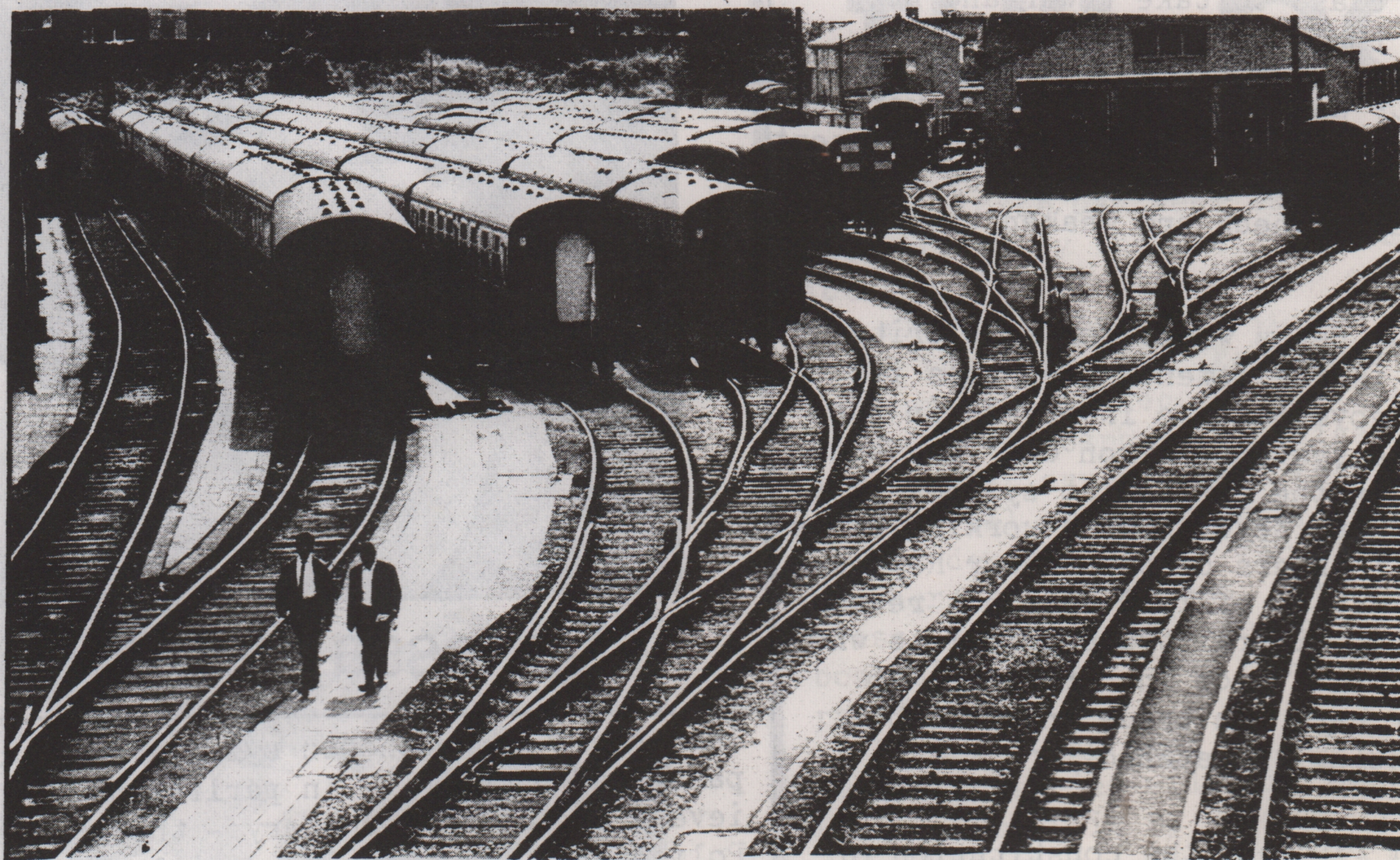
The present dispute is very complex. It involves not only opposing points on wage assessment but is seen as an inter-union disagreement. The N.U.R. having accepted the managements proposals as the basis for the wage structure. With the media concentrating its attention on the newsworthy aspects of the inter-union dispute and the disruption to London commuter services, there is very little sympathy and support for the A.S.L.E.&F. claim.

x x x x x

An O.R.A. member here interviews a driver who has worked on the railway for nearly fifty years and is a member of A.S.L.E.&F. about how he sees the dispute.

Q. Why did A.S.L.E.&F. not accept the managements proposals for your pay structure?

A. In the British Rail Boards' report for the working party, there are three main issues; one, the question of mileage and bonus payments; two, rewards for extra skills and responsibility; and three, working unsocial hours. The main issue we disagree with is how the mileage and bonus pay is calculated. At the moment, after a



ALL QUIET ON THE RAILWAYS FRONT

driver has done 125 miles, he gets additional payment for all the miles after that. The B.R.B. propose that all miles up to 200 won't be paid extra for - but that the basic rate is increased from £33 to £33.45

The driver not working long mileage will gain £2.45. Long mileage drivers will be compensated for that loss for one year but then that's that. There will still be some few drivers required to work turns more than 200 miles. B.R. are prepared to continue paying mileage payments to them.

Q. Do many drivers do more than 200 miles?

A. No, a small percentage. B.R.B. propose to compensate drivers working under 200mls for any loss in mileage, up to Jan 1st 1975. A.S.L.E.F. has turned this down, as they want mileage payments to be consolidated (included) in the basic rate up to 125 miles like they are now, and that extra payment for all long mileage be based on our present rate of pay. At the moment it is based on the pre 1968 basic rate of pay, so that mileage payments are now made at about 50 per cent of the present wage rate. The pre 1968 rate was the result of a productivity deal made by A.S.L.E.F. and N.U.R. with B.R.B. in 1968.

Pay Rates

Q. What else was in the B.R.B offer?

A. We had applied for additional payment for skill and responsibility, based on dieselisation, higher speeds, heavier trains, intensified suburban working etc. The B.R.B. have only offered £1.50. We maintain that's not enough. Today trains are running up to speeds of 100 miles an hour, diesel locomotives are running in multiple under only one driver and we are hauling heavier trains. British rail are proposing to haul trains of 2,700 tons and to construct locos that in multiple working can provide up to 10,000 horse power.

Q. What qualifications do you have to have to be a driver?

A. Good eyesight, good health, must be able to absorb the technical knowledge of the job. I consider my job as highly skilled, it's not a question of how many 'O' levels you've got - how many 'O' levels does an MP have to have? I have to pass a certain number of exams and then there's the quest-

ion of the safety of the lives involved. Its very difficult to assess skill and I don't think that you can do it by comparing one worker with another. I wouldn't say that a signalman is not an important worker, but the driver of a train has in his hands the lives of hundreds of people; we are the most disciplined section of the railway.

Q. What about payment for unsocial hours?

A. Management offered a payment per shift, A.S.L.E.F. want a payment in the basic rate, to take account of the unsocial hours worked.

Q. Are there drivers who mainly work nights?

A. Very rare. Since all drivers work a link system based on the 24 hours of the day, they all experience unsocial hours. Therefore we want it in the basic rate. If the amount is in the basic rate, it is considered for enhancements and is not just a set rate of additional money.

Q. How are your wages made up?

A. There's the basic rate of £33, the first £2.50 of mileage payment and bonus is included (consolidated) in that basic rate, so a man with no mileage gets £33, a man who earns £5 bonus would get £33 plus £2.50. There are enhancements for night duty, Sundays are overtime. Saturday is at time and a quarter and of course mileage payments are additional.

Q. What are the bonus payments for?

A. They're schemes that give payment for working freight trains from yard to yard.

Q. In your contract of employment are shift work and weekend work obligatory?

A. Yes, you work a 24 hour rostering seven days a week. You can book on any hour of the day. I work a link diagram with twenty four other drivers based on a 24 week cycle pattern. I work five turns a week normally lasting eight hours, making a 40 hour week. This is my standard week.

Q. Do many drivers work overtime?

A. No, as the majority work single manning now (only one man in the drivers cab, no second man). A driver, working single manned is not permitted to work over 8 hours at a time, he must also have a minimum of 12 hours rest in between turns. Most overtime is got from long runs, as it is difficult to roster a run of exactly 8 hours.

Q. Is there a great variation of wages between some A.S.L.E.F. members because of mileage opportunities?

CLAIM

THE CAPITALIST PRESS VIEW OF THE DISPUTE



STAGE MANAGED BY B.R.B. TO SPLIT THE RAILMEN

A. Not great variations, but there are variations. All drivers are on a basic rate, that is why A.S.L.E.F. are interested in improving the basic rate for all drivers. This is why we turned down the £1.50 for responsibility and want unsocial hours to be in the basic rate. I think that men who work long mileage will always want better pay than those on less and this could be covered by the responsibility payment. The

southern commuter driver has a lot of responsibility with the number of passengers he carries etc. The reason A.S.L.E.F. men are so strongly against this offer is because it is taking money from one driver to give to another - one worker is paying for another's rise. The principle of a Trade Union is to obtain increases from the employer, i.e. B.R.B.

Q. What is your main difference with the N.U.R. on this agreement?

A. We're not prepared that workers should give up wages to subsidise others. By consolidating the mileage payments up to 200 miles some drivers are going to lose. We are arguing here on extra payments, I agree that the lower paid driver should get rises but not at the expense of his fellow worker.

Q. What is the position of the N.U.R. drivers?

A. In my depot and generally they're all behind us and none of them scabbed on us. A.S.L.E.F. have said nothing publicly about the N.U.R.'s attitude. The N.U.R. should not have publicly attacked us. They represent their members and can settle as they see fit.

Q. Do you see a future for A.S.L.E.F. in its present form as a small skilled union? A. So long as there are trains to be driven the skill of the front man is important, and as long as they combine together, they are a strong union.

Q. Do you think there should be one strong Trade Union for all rail-way men?

A. Yes, there could be, so long as it acknowledges the autonomy of the various grades in the industry, on a pattern like the Transport and General Workers Union. A.S.L.E.F. has been always been prepared to accept a federated union. I do not believe that the N.U.R. as constituted at present can provide the machinery.

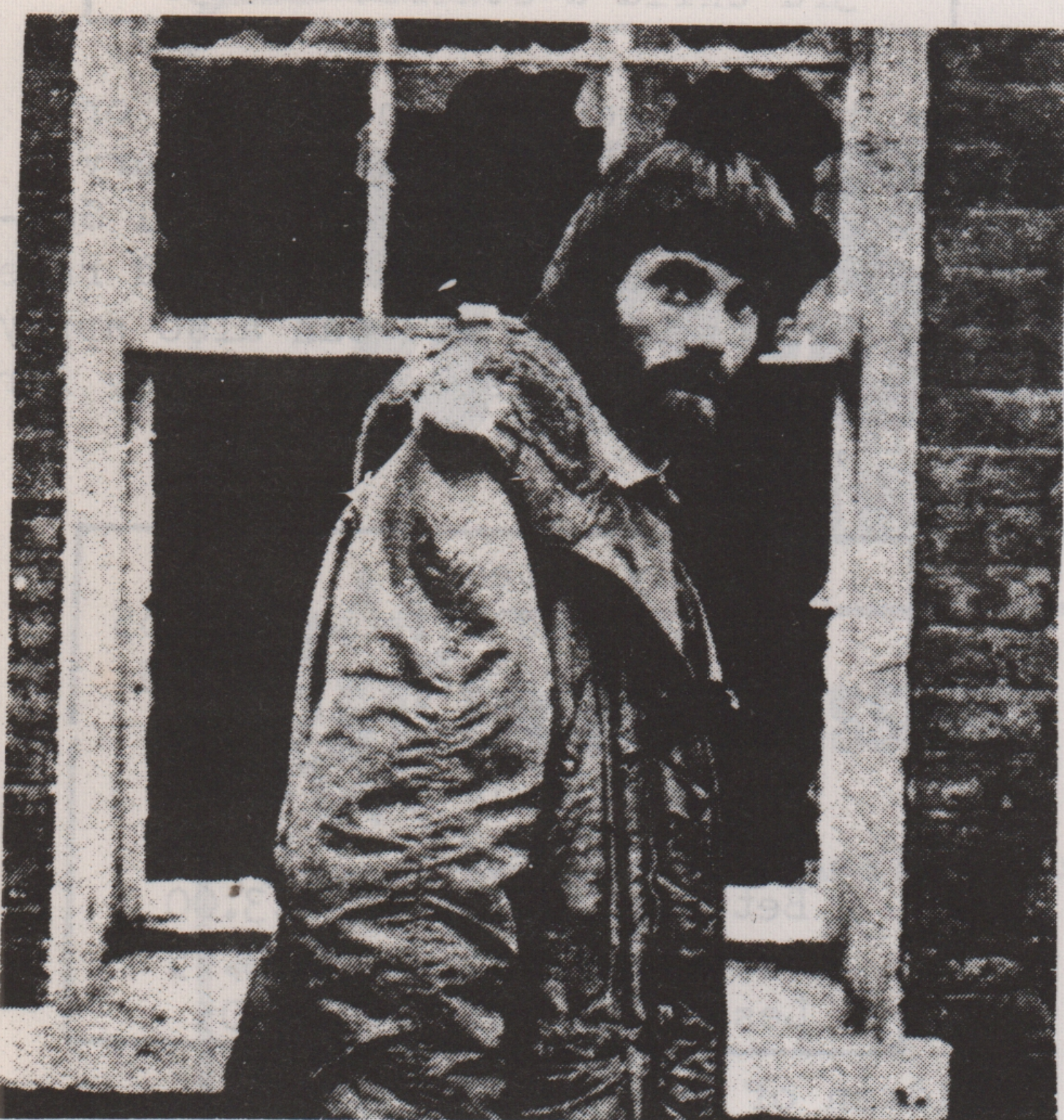
Q. Would you prefer one Union?

A. Yes, but only in the light of that autonomy. We would have a larger membership to back us up, especially now that the rail-way unions have lost a lot of their industrial strength through successive governments' policies of backing the roads.

There are 28,000 members of A.S.L.E.F.
There are 130,000 members of the N.U.R.

review

ferndale fires by chris searle



Chris Searle, the London teacher who was sacked from his job at Sir John Cass school, Stepney, and who later regained it after a hard fight over publishing his kids poems without the school governors' permission, has started a young writer's workshop in Cable Street.

The quality and political commitment of much of the work is very good and it was given a public hearing recently by the 'Basement Writers' as the group is called, at the Half Moon theatre in Aldgate. Here is one example:

THE FUTURE OF SOCIETY

We're heading for a confrontation,
The Tories introduce new legislation.
Put the Troops on red alert,
Gave those Workers a bit of Tory dirt.

The railwaymen, miners, engineers,
dockers and
transport workers want more bread,
The Working Class is turning RED?
Phase Three won't give no more,
Because Capitalism wants us poor.

The T.U.C. and Labour offer the usual
scorn,
Like compromise, reform and all that
corn,
So Workers unite for their common cause,
And Revolution is on our doors.

Revolution has finally come today,
Soldiers and Workers die away,
And in the end Capitalism goes and
Socialism takes the place,
Where ALL workers live in an equal race.
KEITH JONES.

He also has a new children's book out called 'Ferndale Fires'. Rather, it is three stories about the same children and the place where they live - a shabby tenement block in Brixton. He shows by a fictional story line and the poems of the 4th year children of Santley Junior School,

Brixton, how the children and their parents who live in the same flats begin to band together and fight the Council and the land lords.

The most dangerous threat to health is the threat of fire caused by playing children knocking over paraffin heaters. The poems are simple and unaffected, and that has always been Chris Searle's greatest talent - to get a child to translate his or her imagination into words.

The most successful story of the three is the first one - a description of how a family of black kids accidentally set their living-room alight and of their subsequent rescue by the neighbours. The other two - one about the countries the kids have come from and the poems they sing about them and the other, about the parents actively organising after a second fire are rather uneasy: in the middle one because there is an imposition of what Chris would like the parents and children to do and what I suspect they would do and say in the situation. Kids certainly swear much more.

However I would recommend 'Ferndale Fire' to anyone, including the excellent drawings by Mel Robinson. Contact E.L.T.A. Young Teachers, Dame Colet House, Stepney Green, London, E.1. if you are interested and can not get a copy.

In the same evening at the Half Moon, a group of the regular actors there gave a preview of a short show they are putting on in the local schools. It consists of three cameos which demonstrate kids' legal rights if they are picked up by the police, and the pitfalls they are likely to fall into under interrogation. The performances were a bit self-conscious when I saw it but the content was excellent and valuable, given the reputation the law has in the East End.

J.B.

HOLLIS DISPUTE



COLIN JAMES SPEAKING TO HOLLIS WORKERS

Trivialisation

Recently newspapers have had great amusement with the story of the 'sawn off chair legs' strike. This attempt to trivialise the matter should not be allowed to cloud the important issues raised by the events at Hollis's, a timber factory in Hull.

The firm has several unions within it, and a joint shop stewards committee has been in existence for some time, for the men had felt that there was a need for unity to protect workers interests. At the beginning of the so-called "Emergency", the management stated that they were not prepared to discuss any grievances within the factory at all, 'because of the situation'. They then demanded the suspension of all existing national agreements, and the introduction of measures such as half hour dinners and no Saturday rates. An arrangement was worked out whereby the workers worked 36 hours and were paid for 40 hours. This was accepted by a majority of the unions, except the A.U.E.W. Their membership was small and they had no official shop steward; Colin James, the man sacked, had his application in for the position. He had acted in that capacity during the negotiations with the management, so the management had implicitly recognised him as shop steward.

He was sacked ostensibly for the 'offence' of sawing the legs off a chair; but it was obviously a case of victimisation of a militant. It must be understood that Colin James was sacked to dampen down militancy and that the 'chairleg' incident was just a pretext.

Then 520 workers from several different unions came out in support, pressing for his reinstatement, with negotiation on the matter of discipline. There were only 3 scab drivers, who were long distance drivers. All the internal transport men were out. 120 workers continued, even though there was no work for them. The management felt that it was worth paying them in attempt to demoralise those on strike.

FTAT backs blackleg

They failed in this aim. F.T.A.T union announced that if any member of their union refused to cross the picket lines, he would lose his union card and therefore his job. This did happen to one worker.

Support was also obtained from Hull dockers. They immediately blacked the 3 ships in the docks with cargoes for Hollis. However they unloaded the cargo so that Hollis would have to pay ground rent; they ensured that the timber was not moved, despite attempts to divert it to Goole. Moves were also made to obtain support from the London factory of Hollis and from the London dockers.

There are valuable lessons for the working class in this strike, which has since been resolved with the reinstatement of Colin James. The tactic of isolating and victimising militants will increase, and can only be fought by united action and determination. Increasingly the working class will be betrayed by union bureaucracies; all efforts must be directed to ensuring that the working class are not reliant on them.

work or full pay

The three day week is nothing but a cheap trick by the last government to divide the rest of the working class from the miners. They hope to put into people's minds the idea that the miners are to blame for capitalism's economic crisis, and to create an atmosphere of siege in the country so that any measures that are implemented will seem perfectly justified.

The demand must be for five days pay, whether working or not. We, the working class, must not be made to suffer for the bosses' crisis. They created it, they must pay for it.

If the 3-day week continues then massive redundancies will hit industry. We must combat this by occupations of threatened factories. The bosses plan to attack

the workers by closing unprofitable enterprises and investing in property and other countries, at the same time decreasing the work force and making fewer people do more work.

The demand must be made: 5 DAYS PAY - WORK OR NOT.

The strategy against redundancy is occupation of the threatened factory.

CLAIMING

For those claiming because of the three day week, flat rate unemployment benefit for two days can be obtained. You must sign on at the Employment exchange as soon as you can.

Weekly Rates:	
Single person:	£7.35
Married woman:	£5.15
Person under 16:	£4.05
Wife and dependant:	£4.55
1st dependant child:	£2.30
2nd dependant child:	£1.40
3rd child & others:	£1.30

If you haven't got enough stamps for that benefit, you can get supplementary benefit from the Department of Social Security - £7.15 per week, plus rent and rate H.P. payments as well. You can also apply for an 'Exceptional Needs Grant' to pay for fuel bills, bedding and clothing.

Weekly rates:	
Husband and wife:	£11.65
Single person:	£7.15
Person over 18:	£5.70
Between 18-16:	£4.40
Between 16-13:	£3.70
Between 13-11:	£3.00
Between 11-5:	£2.45
Less than 5:	£2.05

Children of most people working on a 3-day week are entitled to free school meals. If your income is low, you can claim for dental and optical treatment plus prescription charges - your doctor, dentist or optician will supply you with the necessary form.

miners fight



NOT A SPECIAL CASE

It is essential that the miners do not lose their strike. On no account must they be seen as a 'special case' - on the contrary, they must be seen as leading the way for other workers to bust right through Phase 3. They must be supported by all other workers in this fight, for if they remain isolated, the less are their chance of victory.

The TUC leadership are doing their utmost to calm down the situation, and make sure that the miners are seen as a special case'. Their abject compliance with Tory Policy on Phase 3 is indicative of their total intergration into the capitalist system. Over the last few years they could have initiated massive opposition to the Industrial Relations Act, the Fair Rent Act, the attack on pickets and so on. Instead they did next to nothing. Murray, Jones, Scanlon and co. cannot be trusted. Effective rank and file organisation must be built to ensure that unionists are able to mobilize successfully against the ruling class.

NUM leadership

The NUM bureaucracy, apparently more 'left' than the other union leaders, are in fact no better than Murray and his crew. Already they can be seen to be pushing the 'special case' idea. The acceptance of such an idea can only be disastrous for workers and score another win for the bosses.

Gormley was already starting to back down when an election was announced. He sought to call the strike off. It should be realised once and for all that the NUM leadership were forced into a strike in the first place, by the majority wish of the membership.

While the Communist Party members of the miners' executive appear to be pushing for a tough line, in actual fact, they are forced by rank and file militancy into this situation in order not to lose credibility for themselves and their party. CP member on executives of other unions back down over any wage claim that would go through Phase 3, exposing the half-hearted Communist opposition to Tory policies. (Max Morris on the NUT exec. is a good example).

The working class must rally to the miners cause - a gain for the miners is a gain for the whole class.

N.H.

O.R.A.

AIMS & PRINCIPLES

The following shorter version of Aims and Principles was passed at the ORA conference held in Leeds on 26-27 January.

1. Capitalism is a class society.
2. The basic irreconcilable contradiction within it is between the class which owns and controls the means of production, distribution and exchange, the bourgeoisie, and the class who produce the agricultural and industrial wealth, the working class.
3. The social enslavement and exploitation of the working class forms the basis on which modern society stands, without which capitalism could not exist.
4. The State is the instrument of the ruling class. To destroy the power of the bourgeoisie, we must destroy the power of the State.
5. Russia and China are class societies in each of which a ruling class of administrators collectively owns and controls the means of production, distribution and exchange and in which a working class, the sole producer of all wealth, is exploited by that class. These States we would define as corporate state capitalist, in that the ruling class is totally integrated with the State, as is the trade union structure.
6. The class nature of society is reflected in all the dominant philosophies; class race, sexual, social and personal relationships. The class relationships are expressed through all social relationships and generate attitudes such as sexism and racism.
7. The conflict of interests between the two classes generates the class struggle. In the history of society, the class struggle has been the primary factor in the determination of the form and structure of society.
8. The day to day struggles of the working class reflect the class struggle. The position of the working class as the collective producer of society's wealth makes it the only force capable of replacing capitalism by a classless society. The existing defensive organisations thrown up by the working class such as the trade unions whose bureaucracy is increasingly incorporated into capitalism, are not adequate for the smashing of capitalism, and the building of a free classless society. However, working class rank and file organisations, such as democratically controlled shop steward committees, strike committees are developing through the place of work. These organisations are the forerunners of workers councils which are the expression of working class power. Outside of work, the working class has developed other forms of organisation that are potentially revolutionary, such as tenants action committees, rent strike committees, and tenant-worker joint action committees.
9. Dual power exists before the power of the bourgeoisie is smashed. If the working class are successful then the organisation of the needs of society will be firmly based in working class hands. This is the collective working class in power, in which the working class destroys all remnants of bourgeois society, such as racialism, the family and hierarchies. This is the period of transition between capitalism and libertarian communism.

10. From our analysis of society we reach the inevitable conclusion that capitalism cannot be reformed in any fundamental way and that the only meaningful transformation of society is through the development of working class organisations and by means of a violent social revolution. Violence becomes inevitable for the working class to defend themselves against the onslaught of the dispossessed ruling class.

The Role of the ORA

1. The task of the ORA is to aid the preparation of the working class for their seizure of power. The establishment of an anarchist society is something that has to be consciously fought for by the working class. ORA is a conscious, organised expression of libertarian communist ideas. Through the shared experience, information and knowledge of the class struggle, ORA must be able to analyse and disseminate the nature of the problems facing the working class and apply these lessons in the class struggle.
2. ORA aims to offer a lead within the working class movement by example and explanation: and to build into the movement a high level of political consciousness, so that it is capable of defeating capitalism and fighting the creation of a new ruling class. Fundamental to this is the contradiction between the organisation as a tendency within the class and its being ideological advance of it. This contradiction can only be solved with the establishment of a libertarian communist society. During the period of transition, the potential basis for the emergence of a new ruling class is progressively removed, so that the need for separately organised libertarianism will decrease.
3. ORA seeks to develop and support working class organisations which are the forerunners of workers councils, and to develop in them revolutionary consciousness. ORA does not seek independent power for itself but seeks to work through the working class organisations.
4. ORA seeks to establish international links with the libertarian revolutionary organisations and groups with an aim at establishing an international communist movement.
5. ORA seeks to combat attitudes of sexism, racism and national chauvinism as attitudes which help maintain class society.

The form our organisation takes is a realisation of libertarian perspectives in the current situation. We recognise that it is not a social model of a free society and must itself develop in interaction with the developing liberation of society.

- i. We are a membership organisation.
- ii. Membership is open to those who agree with our analysis of society and its transformation and who work towards this end.
- iii. The main policy-making body will be the National Conference. Between National Conferences there will be held monthly Delegate Conferences to co-ordinate and carry out National Conference decisions, to decide interim policy on urgent issues and to initiate activity. Delegates are mandatable and rotated. Delegate Conference decisions can be revoked by National Conference.
- iv. We seek to establish ORA groups in all areas, not only geographical, but also industrial, educational etc. Groups interpret National Conference decisions and Delegate Conference decisions to relate tactics to their local experience.

N.U.T. SELL OUT

The executive of the National Union of Teachers has given in to Phase 3 of the Government's wages controls. It has dropped its £250 million national pay claim, 'because of the economic crisis'. Nine days before it was due to meet the Burnham Committee, where pay is negotiated, it announced its willingness to settle within Phase 3, for less than a third of the original claim. A few days earlier the Exec. had declared that in spite of Government policy it wanted 25%; the settlement is about 7% all round. Not only that, but within the settlement the pay differential has widened considerably. On Scale 1, the lowest scale, it gives £130 a year to teachers who are taking home little over £17 a week at the age of 21-22, whereas the top scale gets £350 and are those who already take home considerably more. 'We still have 25% as our long term aim' says Max Morris, Communist N.U.T. President. To the Exec. the aim has to be long term, since any realistic wage claim at the moment confronts Government policy.

The N.U.T. was used as an example of how a tame union should act, by Ted Heath in the opening speech of his election campaign. Actually the N.U.T. hasn't given in completely yet. The Exec. has felt sufficiently disturbed by the anger of many of its members to be moved to hold a special delegate Salaries Conference, on 16th February, to discuss their decision to back down from their original demand.

The delegates will probably vote to settle within Phase 3. If they don't and instead hammer the Exec., the militant sections of the membership will be amazed and delighted; but this wouldn't obscure the fact that the N.U.T. is one of the most



N.U.T. TEACHERS CONFERENCE

undemocratic unions in the T.U.C.

The fact is that none of the N.U.T. associations of Federation of associations can go on strike and expect official recognition from the union: to do so is outlawed by the union's constitution. However 90% of strikes in the Industrial Unions are initiated by unofficial action and are recognised as official after.

The wage negotiations of the N.U.T. are conducted by a small committee who then reports its decisions back to the membership as a 'fait accompli'.

The N.U.T. is a highly centralised and unwieldy organisation. This means that

when a teacher stands for a position in the upper bureaucracy he/she has to be prepared to spend an inordinate amount of time on it. Only headteachers have that time and it is they who dominate the powerful positions. In class terms, headteachers are synonymous with the management rather than the majority of the N.U.T. members whose interests they are supposed to be fighting for - 70% of teachers are on the lowest pay scale.

Since the N.U.T. has historically based its notions of employment on the premise of a professional, elitist nature and subsequently has petit-bourgeois origins, it will split at a time of crisis. When the going gets rough for all unions, and when the Government, Labour or Conservative, sheds its facade of parliamentary democracy the militants will have to fight the reactionaries from within as well as the Government.

However, militancy and real Trade Union consciousness in the N.U.T. is concentrated geographically in the big cities. London's anger at the recent betrayal of their London Allowance campaign by the Exec. is an example of this. It is probable that the N.U.T. will shed its petit-bourgeois make up by a fast flow of resignations by the 'no-strike' professionals, coupled with a withering away of the county associations.

Unofficial strike action is certainly possible in the near future particularly in London. The present London Allowance claim for £350 has yet to be settled, and cities like Glasgow, likewise suffer from a staff shortage.

At a public meeting on Staff Shortage, held by the East London Teacher's Association, parents were angry that the teachers weren't going to strike for more pay. A woman shouted that they were strangled by professionalism. Not for much longer we hope.

PUBLICATIONS

Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists. (ORA pamphlet). Advance orders to 29, Cardigan Rd. Leeds 6.

Mole Express. Manchester voice of revolutionary struggle. 10p monthly. from 7, Summer Terr. Manchester 14swd

Portugal Libertario. 15p. Para todas informacoes escreve a 68 Chingford rd London E.17.

De Vrije Socialist - Dutch Libertarian Socialist Fed. Copies - Jan Pervoets, Willem de Zwijgerlaan 104, Den Haag, Netherlands.

Front Libertaire fortnightly paper of ORA France. Sample copy from N. London. Subscriptions - 33, rue des Vigoles, 75020 Paris France.

Solidarity. 6p plus post from 123, Lothar Rd. London E.6.

Street Research 15p a copy plus post B.R.B. 86, Raiton Rd, London SE 24.

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N. LONDON ORA

Libertarian Struggle Discussion Groups
Contact Group Secretary.

Public Meeting: 1926 and NOW -
lessons of the General Strike.

Small Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.
London WC1. Speaker Bob Dent. March 4
7p.m.

LELDS ORA

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Secretary.

HULL ORA

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